E-auction of coalfields

†*364. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that e-auction has led to a conflict-like situation in Chhendipada Open Cast Project (OCP) under Orissa-based Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL) over past few months;

(b) whether that OCP is closed for months together;

(c) whether this has led to discontentment among local populace, who have taken to agitation; and

(d) if so, the measures Government has taken to address this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) was offering coal under e-auction and coal was being booked from Chhendipada Open Cast Project. It has been reported that Coal Consumers' Association, Chhendipada who are basically traders and are therefore participating in e-auction and Truck Owners Association of Chhendipada, were allowing only their members and not others to lift the auctioned coal.

(b) In view of agitation by some buyers as mentioned above, the dispatch was stopped from 20.01.2008 to 28.02.08 though production continued and as the coal stock accumulated and went up to nearly 49,000 tonnes at the pithead site and there was no place to stack more coal, production from that mine was stopped from 23.02.08 to 22.03.2008.

(c) Mahanadi Coalfields Limited/Coal India Limited has reported that only a group of people who were trying to monopolize the lifting, have resorted to agitation.

(d) At the District level and at Revenue Divisional Commissioner level, meetings were conducted involving the concerned people. In the meeting with Revenue Divisional Comissioner, it was decided to offer/dispatch 10% production through e-auction and rest 90% to the linked consumers from this colliery. Coal dispatches have resumed from 23.3.2008.

Allotment of flats under Journalists' quota

*368. SHRI ALI ANWAR ANSARI: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a policy was formulated to fix two per cent quota for the journalists accredited by Press Information Bureau (PIB) for allotment of flats constructed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA);

(b) whether it is a fact that a large number of PIB accredited journalists are homeless;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government has not invited applications for the allotment of flats in journalists' quota for the last several years;

Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.